BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0237 FEBRUARY 25, 1976
DAVID LENT/BEIRUT

SADAT-KHALED TALKS

ANNCR:

THE EVIDENCE IS THAT TALKS BETWEEN THE KING OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE PRESIDENT OF EGYPT CONCENTRATED ON THE SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. DAVID LENT REPORTS FROM THE VOA MIDDLE EAST BUREAU.

VOICE:

THE WORD WHICH HAS FILTERED OUT OF THE ROYAL HUNTING TENT IN THE DESERT ABOUT ONE HUNDRED KILOMETERS EAST OF RIYAD, IS THAT NEITHER EGYPT NOR SAUDI ARABIA WILL ALLOW A NEW STALEMATE IN THE SEARCH FOR A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. THE WORD CAME IN A STATEMENT BY SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER, PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL, WHO HAS BEEN ATTENDING THE TALKS BETWEEN KING KHALED AND PRESIDENT SADAT. THE PRINCE SAID THE LEADERS ARE ALSO CONCENTRATING ON ACHIEVING UNITY IN ARAB RANKS. HE SAID UNITY IS A BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR PROGRESS TOWARDS SETTLING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT.

THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT HAS CONTINUED TO STRESS HIS CONVICTION THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE IRANIAN NEWS AGENCY, PRESIDENT SADAT IS QUOTED AS SAYING THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO SUCCESS AT GENEVA WOULD BE ANOTHER MIDDLE EAST WAR. IN THE SAME INTERVIEW, THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT RULED OUT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT TAKE PLACE, HE SAID, WITH A PARTY WHICH HAS OCCUPIED THE OTHER PARTY'S TERRITORY AND WANTS TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS. THE IRANIAN NEWS AGENCY QUOTES PRESIDENT SADAT AS SAYING EGYPT'S

FINAL STRATEGY REMAINS THAT NOT ONE BIT OF ARAB LAND MUST BE LOST. HE STRESSED THAT NO DEALS CAN BE MADE OVER THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN NATION.

EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, ISMAIL FAHMY SAID HIS COUNTRY WOULD WELCOME ARAB EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WITH SYRIA. BUT HE SAID THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TENSION SHOULD TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD NORMALIZING RELATIONS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO. EVIDENCE CAME IN A BEIRUT NEWSPAPER THAT SAUDI ARABIA MAY BE TAKING INITIATIVES TO SMOOTH OUT DIFFERENCES FOLLOWING FINAL IMPLEMENTATION OVER THE WEEKEND OF THE SECOND SINAI ACCORD. KING KHALED SENT A MESSAGE TO PALESTINIAN LEADER, YASSIR ARAFAT. THE PRO-SAUDI NEWSPAPER, AL-HAYT, REPORTED THAT MISTER ARAFAT WILL SOON PAY A VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA. THE NEWSPAPER SAYS THAT THE SAUDI MONARCH AFFIRMED HIS COUNTRY'S SUPPORT FOR THE COMMANDO MOVEMENT AND CALLED FOR THE UNIFICATION OF ALL ARAB EFFORTS FOR THE SAKE OF PALESTINE AND FACING THE COMMON ENEMY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE EGYPTIAN NEWSPAPER AL-GOMHOURIA, SAID EGYPT PLANS A BIG DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN IN THE SPRING FOLLOWING PRESIDENT SADAT'S CURRENT TOUR OF SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER GULF STATES. THE NEWSPAPER GAVE NO FURTHER DETAILS.

GH/PBM